

Questions for the Record
U.S. House Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Trade
Hearing on Trade and Labor: Creating and Enforcing Rules to Benefit American Workers
March 26, 2019

From Representative Gwen Moore to Shane Larson

1. Governments, businesses, trade unions, civil society, and international organizations all have important roles in promoting and enabling good governance. What are meaningful actions the Communication Workers of America union can undertake or have undertaken to fill the gaps in trade agreements and/or domestic policy that directly undermine the level playing field for businesses/labor and undermine the benefits that globalization is supposed to bring?

First and foremost, it is important to recognize that, while globalization in theory is supposed to bring broad benefits, the actual policies that the U.S. has adopted regarding globalization have instead been deliberately designed solely to benefit multinational corporations.

Our trade agreements include myriad provisions designed to ensure that corporations can move money, production and jobs anywhere in the world, secure in the knowledge that they will have duty-free access to the U.S. market, access to significant parts of the U.S. government procurement market, and extremely strong legal, investment and intellectual property protections. In contrast, because the worker and environmental protections in our agreements are extremely weak, vague, and impossible to enforce in practice, corporations can move jobs to countries where they know they'll be able to exploit workers and pollute the environment.

Moreover, our trade agreements don't include any provisions whatsoever to combat tax evasion; combined with the 2017 tax overhaul that provides benefits to corporations that outsource jobs, this failure makes it all the more clear that this system is designed to benefit multinational corporations at the expense of workers and communities.

That said, CWA actively works in many ways to combat the challenges presented by globalization outside the context of our trade agreements, as well. Most immediately, we maintain close relationships with democratic unions in the Philippines, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere and support those workers' fights to ensure that their rights are respected.

We also work to combat offshoring of good American jobs more directly as part of our bargaining. For example, during our bargaining with Verizon in 2016, during which we sent a delegation to visit Verizon workers in the Philippines to learn about labor abuses there, we successfully pushed the company to create 1,300 more call center jobs in the U.S. We are working to ensure that AT&T also stops offshoring jobs as part of our ongoing negotiations with the company regarding our contract in the Midwest.

In the event that our members or other workers in our sectors do have their jobs offshored, we also help them collect Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits. For example, in 2012, we helped secure TAA benefits for 3,300 T-Mobile call center workers whose jobs were offshored. We also worked with Sen. Casey to help secure TAA benefits for over 400 Wells Fargo call center workers whose jobs were offshored in 2017.

More broadly, we consistently advocate for economic policies that ensure the creation of good jobs in the United States, including building out broadband infrastructure to underserved communities, and to ensure that no workers are left behind. That's why we helped advocate for passage of the Affordable Care Act and continue to fight for improved health care, as well as supporting legislation like H.R. 582, the Raise the Wage Act.

2. Please explain how your union has evaluated the impact on the surrounding communities of collective bargaining on lowering unemployment rates and increasing wage productivity.

The highly-respected Economic Policy Institute has conducted extensive research regarding both of these issues. In specific, I refer you to EPI's 2016 study, "Union decline lowers wages of nonunion workers" (<https://www.epi.org/files/pdf/112811.pdf>) and the 2007 study, "Strong unions, strong productivity" (https://www.epi.org/publication/webfeatures_snapshots_20070620/). Anecdotally, I can confirm that, when our members secure contracts with higher wages and better benefits, non-union employers in those same industries frequently raise wages themselves in order to avoid significant worker turnover.